

Always Worship the Lord!
Sermon on Psalm 100
Saint Mark's, Watertown, WI
Pastor Karl Walther
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As the psalmist said: *Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker!* Amen.

God's Word for our brief consideration this Good Shepherd Sunday morning is Psalm one hundred. It is:

A psalm. For giving thanks.

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. -- Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. -- For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Introduction: Why Do We Worship?

Dear fellow Christians in Christ's flock:

Why are you here today? Better yet: Why are you here in worship, week by week?

That's a good question, isn't it? And I'll submit to you it has many good answers!

It would be worth worshipping weekly ... just to hear what Christ is accomplishing in our congregation. It would be worth worshipping weekly ... if only to sing our Savior's praises together. It would be worth worshipping weekly ... just to get together to confess our sins and confess our confidence in Christ. It would be worth worshipping weekly ... if only to hear a few words from the almighty Maker of the entire universe. It would be worth worshipping weekly ... just to give our gifts to God and to pray for his protection. It would be worth worshipping weekly ... if only to receive the sacrament—or just to receive encouragement from one another.

Theme: Always Worship the Lord!

But today's Word of the Lord to us hits at the heart of the matter. It has God urging us: * ALWAYS WORSHIP THE LORD! Always worship the Lord!
(1) BECAUSE OF HIS SHEPHERD-LIKE ACTIONS. Always worship the Lord!
(2) BECAUSE OF HIS SHEPHERD-LIKE ATTRIBUTES.

Part One: Worship the Lord Because of His Shepherd-Like Actions!

First of all, you notice, of course, that Psalm one hundred is: *A psalm for giving thanks.* It's the only psalm labeled that way. And it's a perfect designation for this psalm—because twice this psalm will urge us to give thanks to the Lord, and twice it will provide us the reasons to give thanks to the Lord.

Here's how it starts: *Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.*

Look at the verbs there! We're willing to *shout* to the Lord, and not just mumble the liturgy and hymns. We've come to *worship* the Lord—but it literally says: to *serve* him. Think of it: among other things, we're here today to serve to put a smile on our Savior's face. And we have *come before him*—we have *come into his presence*. Right here, right now: God is present; we are meeting with God.

And we're happy about it! We're shouting for *joy*. We're worshipping with *gladness*. *Joyful songs* are on our lips. There's no place else we'd rather be than here!

And why? We're jumping for joy because we ***Know that the LORD is God***. We owe to our exalted King our joyous worship. ***It is he who made us***. We owe to God our very lives. ***And we are his; we are his people***. We owe to God our eternal lives. We are, finally: ***the sheep of his pasture***.

You and I are the sheep of Christ's pasture. ...So, like a Good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus finds food for us, his sheep. He even gives us heavenly food: his blood, shed on the cross to take away our guilt; his body, risen again to guarantee our resurrection to eternal life. ...Like a Good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus finds water for us, his sheep. He even uses it to wash us clean from all the dirty deeds we've fallen into, from all the dirty desires we've waded into. ...Like a Good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus protects us, his sheep. When that old wolf, Satan, seeks to seize us – when that old dragon, the Devil, dares to drag us down – it's Jesus who says: "No! They're mine! You can't have them!" and with his shepherd's staff, his all-powerful Word, he cracks Satan over the head and says: "No one can snatch them out of my hand!"

That's why we always worship the Lord! It's because of his shepherd-like actions on our behalf....

Part Two: Worship the Lord Because of His Shepherd-Like Attributes!

We also worship the Lord, because of the shepherd-like attributes which he puts to work for us.... And those are the final two verses of God's Word to us today.

First of all, the exhortation from God to us: ***Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise*** – it pictures the temple! – ***give thanks to the Lord and praise his name***.

You see: to an Israelite, nothing was more beautiful than the sight of the Lord's temple. Its gates: some of them a hundred feet high (imagine that!) and covered with gold—it's gates were inviting. Its courts: some of them a small city block of pavement, alternately filled with people studying the Scriptures or people catching a glimpse of the temple itself and its sacrifices—its courts were the greatest place on earth to be.

And why? It's because the Lord was there! ***For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations***.

And it's the same for us! For us: nothing is more beautiful than the place where we get to be with God—God, who is so *good* that he gives us delicious meals every day, beautiful clothing every moment, cozy residences year after year after year. Nothing is more beautiful than the place we get to be with God—God, who is so *loving* that he gave us our parents, our relatives, our friends, our spouses, our children and grandchildren. Nothing is more beautiful than the place where we get to be with God—God who is so *faithful* that he shepherds us with health and happiness so very often in our lives, God who also shepherds us through sickness and sadness, God who shepherds us all the way through death and into eternal life.

And what a place you and I have to meet with God! Its steeple points to heaven through the cross of Christ. Its sanctuary houses vibrant worship with – praise God! – lots of worshippers. Its organ and choirs lead us loudly to sing our Savior's praise. Its

font and front and lectern and pulpit proclaim in sturdy terms the Savior Jesus, who is both our Mighty Fortress and our Loving Brother.

Conclusion: That's Why We Worship the Lord!

That's why you're always here, week by week, to worship the Lord! You have no place better to be! You have no better way to pass your time! You have no one on whom better to focus your attention than Jesus your Savior: not just now, but also next week; not just here, but also always. Amen.

As the psalmist said: *The Lord is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.* Amen.